

I am proud to announce the Kentucky has been selected by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as one of only two states in the nation to take part in an important communications interoperability pilot project. This pilot program, which is being conducted by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Interoperability and Compatibility through SAFECOM, will work with response agencies, local officials, and emergency personnel across the Commonwealth to develop a statewide strategy to implement the interoperable communications network.

The project is expected to save the Commonwealth several million dollars in both immediate and long term costs. And while it may save money, it cannot be overstated that this project will also help save lives. When this project is complete, Kentucky will be one of a handful of states to have a focused implementation strategy and we will be well on our way to ensuring that we are prepared for any type of natural or man-made emergency. In an emergency, communication is essential and time is the greatest value and the ability to gather information quickly could mean the difference between life and death. That is why it is our responsibility to provide our first responders with the resources and equipment they need to make our communities the safest they can be. The Kentucky Office of Homeland Security is working hard to provide the state's first responders with the equipment they need when an emergency occurs. In the last two years, the office has distributed over 65 million dollars to response units, police stations, and firehouses statewide. The work of this office and the efforts of the federal Homeland Security Office ensure that we are not surprised or caught off-guard, that we are ready and prepared.

The events of September 11, 2001, will never be erased from our memory and shall remain heavy on our hearts. We should never allow ourselves to forget that more than 3,000 innocent people were killed on that day. We should never forget the bravery that turned our country men and women into heroes. We must remain steadfast to our efforts to protect our commonwealth and our nation and support the people that make this possible.